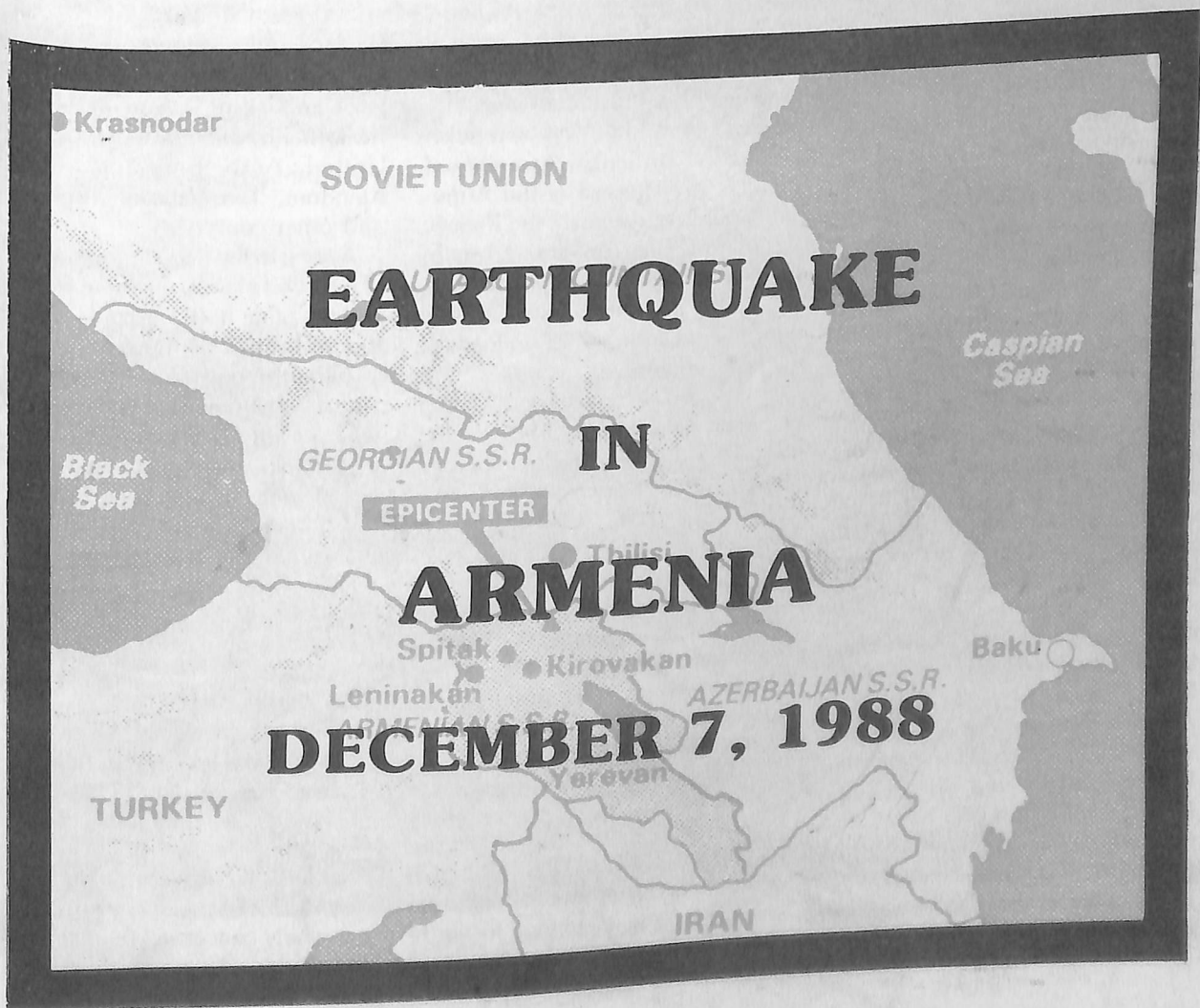


AMMAA

News

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EARTHQUAKE IN ARMENIA: THE LATEST TRAGEDY OF A SUFFERING PEOPLE

It was a peaceful Wednesday morning in Soviet Armenia. Children were in school, men and women were at their workplaces, others were at home preparing meals or looking after infants. There was no warning of impending disaster.

The earthquake struck at 11:41 a.m. on December 7, 1988. The main tremor, reaching 6.9 on the Richter scale, was over in a matter of seconds. Instruments around the world detected the quake immediately, but it took several hours for the Soviet authorities to realize that a major disaster had taken place and to communicate this fact to the world.

Initial reports spoke of "thousands" of deaths, which soon became "tens of thousands." The "official" estimates increased day by day to 30,000, 44,000, 55,000. The *New York Times* on December 18 had this to say about the disaster:

"Although the official death toll remains at 55,000, extensive travel through the zone of destruction leads credence to the view of many foreign specialists that it was perhaps three times that number. A French doctor this week estimated that 100,000 had died in Leninakan alone. In Spitak today, an Italian team that was packing to leave estimated that 30,000 had perished in this region of 50,000 people."

Mikhail Gorbachev, when informed of the disaster, cut short his visit to the United States and flew back to the Soviet Union. He then flew to Armenia to assess the situation personally. Mr. Gorbachev delegated Nicolai Ryzhkov, the Soviet Prime Minister, to coordinate rescue and relief efforts. Mr. Ryzhkov, according to reports, has worked tirelessly on behalf of the survivors and has earned the respect of Armenians.

The international outpouring of relief aid for the earthquake survivors was unprecedented. The United States government, through its Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, acted quickly to provide immediately needed relief supplies and personnel. The first plane, carrying medical supplies and specialists, left from Dulles airport on December 10. Other planeloads of people and supplies followed. This marked the first time since World War II that the Soviet government had accepted disaster assistance from the United States government.

Armenian organizations throughout the world mobilized emergency help for the survivors. In North America, The Missionary Association of America, the Armenian Relief Society, the Armenian Assembly of America, the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, the Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church, the Medical Out-reach for Armenians, Inc., and the Armenian General Benevolent Union sent planeloads of medical equipment, supplies and clothing. Other volunteer agencies providing assistance in cash or in kind included: Adventist Development and Relief Agency, American Red Cross, American Friends Service Committee, American Cares, CARE. Catholic Relief Services, Church World Service, Feed the Children, Lutheran World Relief, Mennonite Central Committee, National Medical Care, People to People, Save the Children, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, Werner Erhart Foundation, World Vision Relief and Development and many others.

In addition, air cargo services were donated by Flying Tigers and Pan Aviation; the international organizations providing assistance to earthquake survivors include: Arab Gulf

Fund for UN Development Organizations, CARE International, European Economic Community, League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, UN Disaster Relief Organization.

The response of governments around the world was immediate and massive. Countries providing assistance in the form of money, supplies, and personnel included: Algeria, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Canada, China, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany(East), Germany(West), Greece, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Pakistan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, The Vatican, Yugoslavia and other countries.

Adding to the tragedy was the crash of two relief planes, one from Moscow and the other from Belgrade, with the loss of lives of all those aboard.

All of the outside help mentioned above, valued at over \$50,000,000, was delivered within ten days of the earthquake, overwhelming the facilities at Yerevan airport and straining the damaged distribution system in the area.

The assistance provided to the 500,000 or more earthquake survivors is temporary. The agony in Armenia will continue as the reality of the full dimension of the catastrophe is setting in . . . More than 500,000 battered survivors—widows, orphans, disabled people—of the killer earthquake have lost their homes, possessions and many of their family members and have nothing but the help extended by caring kinsmen and genuinely concerned people around the world.



SPITAK — An apartment building in ruins



LENINAKAN — Teams of rescue workers searching through rubble of apartment buildings



SPITAK — Soviet soldiers help rescue efforts



LENINAKAN — Survivors searching through rubbles

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Rescued child later died of injuries



Bodies recovered from the ruins



Women weep over dead relatives



Soviet soldiers carrying a coffin



Survivors grieving over a dead family member

ARMENIANS MOURN AGAIN

by Moses B. Janbazian

The centuries-old tragic history of our people was marked with yet another catastrophic event—The Killer Earthquake of December 7, 1988. It is true that this was not another massacre perpetrated by our enemies against our people. Yet its devastating effect was as tragic as the deliberately planned and executed murder of a nation. The instant loss of more than 55,000 lives . . . Tens of thousands of children orphaned overnight . . . Tens of thousands of mothers turned to helpless widows . . . more than 500,000 people left homeless . . . Entire cities destroyed . . . Towns "erased from the face of the earth."

The loss and suffering experienced in the genocide of 1915 revisited our nation. The land so cherished by our people turned once again into "*voghpi Hairenik, vorpi Hairenik*"—"A country of sorrows, a country of orphans."

Out of our shock and our anguish, a series of tormenting questions cross-

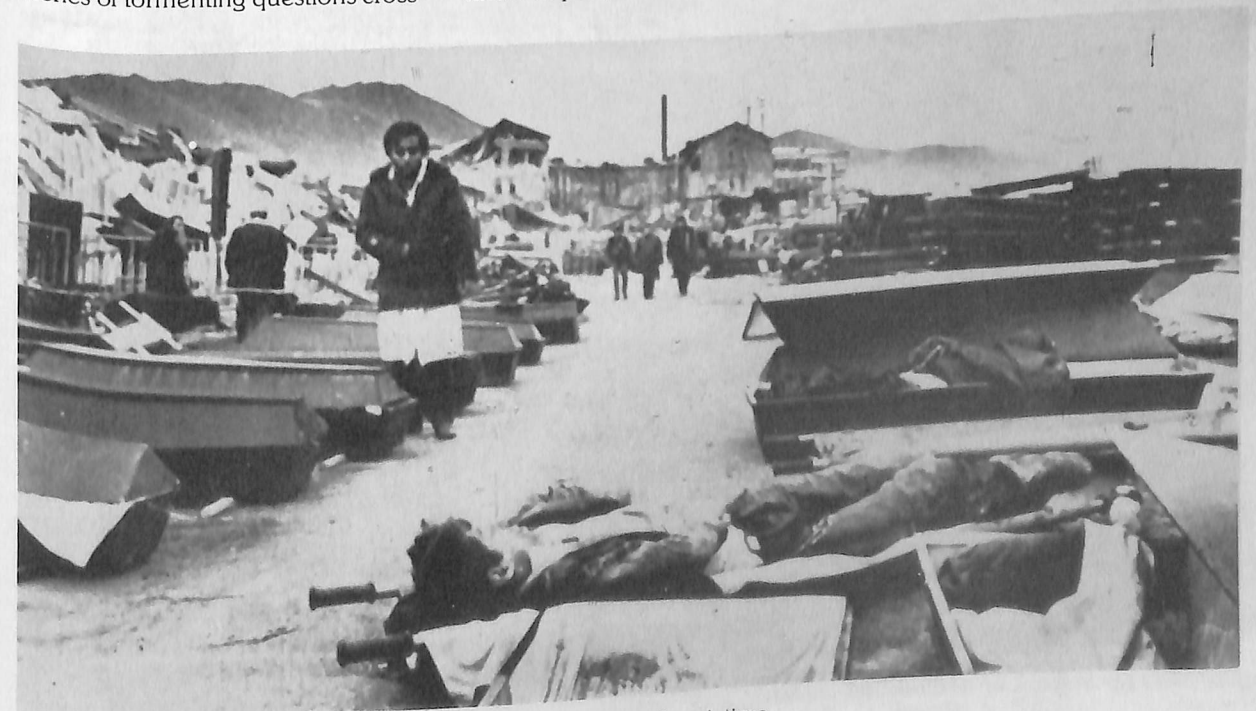
ed the minds of many of us, including this writer: "Why has it happened?" "Why again, Oh, God?" "What profit is there in our death, if we go down to the pit? Will the dust praise thee? Will it tell of thy faithfulness?" Psalm 30:9.

Natural catastrophes, such as earthquakes, volcanoes, tornadoes, hurricanes, are inevitable realities on this planet. While scientists may be able to explain how they happen, no human mind can comprehend why they should strike unsuspecting and innocent people, causing death and human suffering. Because of the inadequacy of our limited human minds, we cannot know why this cataclysmic earthquake claimed the lives of more than 55,000 of our people. We won't know the answer to this and similar questions until the day when we in our turn meet face to face with the Creator of the universe. The apostle Paul reminds us that "now, we know in part, but then we shall know

full . . . so, faith, hope and love abide." Therefore, until that day, for us remains faith—faith in our God whose love for us is so strong that "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:38,39.

★ ★ ★

What our people shared on December 7, 1988, was an extension of what Jesus Christ experienced in His life and achieved by His death. Through His suffering and sacrifice on the cross, Jesus reconciled men and women to God and to one another; through their death and suffering, the victims of the recent earthquake in Armenia brought together nations from the East and the West and from all over the world, to an unprecedented international arena of gen-



A survivor looking for missing relatives among earthquake victims



Father carries rescued son in Spitak

ARMENIA RELIEF COIN BANKS

Children Can Help Too!

In order to encourage our children to participate personally and tangibly in the Armenian Relief effort, The AMAA has launched an "Armenia Relief Coin Bank" program. Bible-shaped coin banks are being made available through Armenian day schools and Sunday schools or directly from the AMAA so that children may save or collect money to help our people in their time of need. Periodically the funds may be sent to the AMAA for allocation to the Armenian Relief and Development Fund.

This program is meant to be more than just a fund-raising effort. Through it, we want to help our children develop an interest in Armenia; to learn to help people in need; to take part in a specific missionary project; to learn, early in life, the grace of giving to a noble cause; and to feel proud that they are helping to alleviate the suffering of their little brothers and sisters in Armenia.

You can help your children learn to love Armenia in word and deed by encouraging them to join the Armenia Relief Coin-Bank program. Fill in the coupon below and mail it to us today.

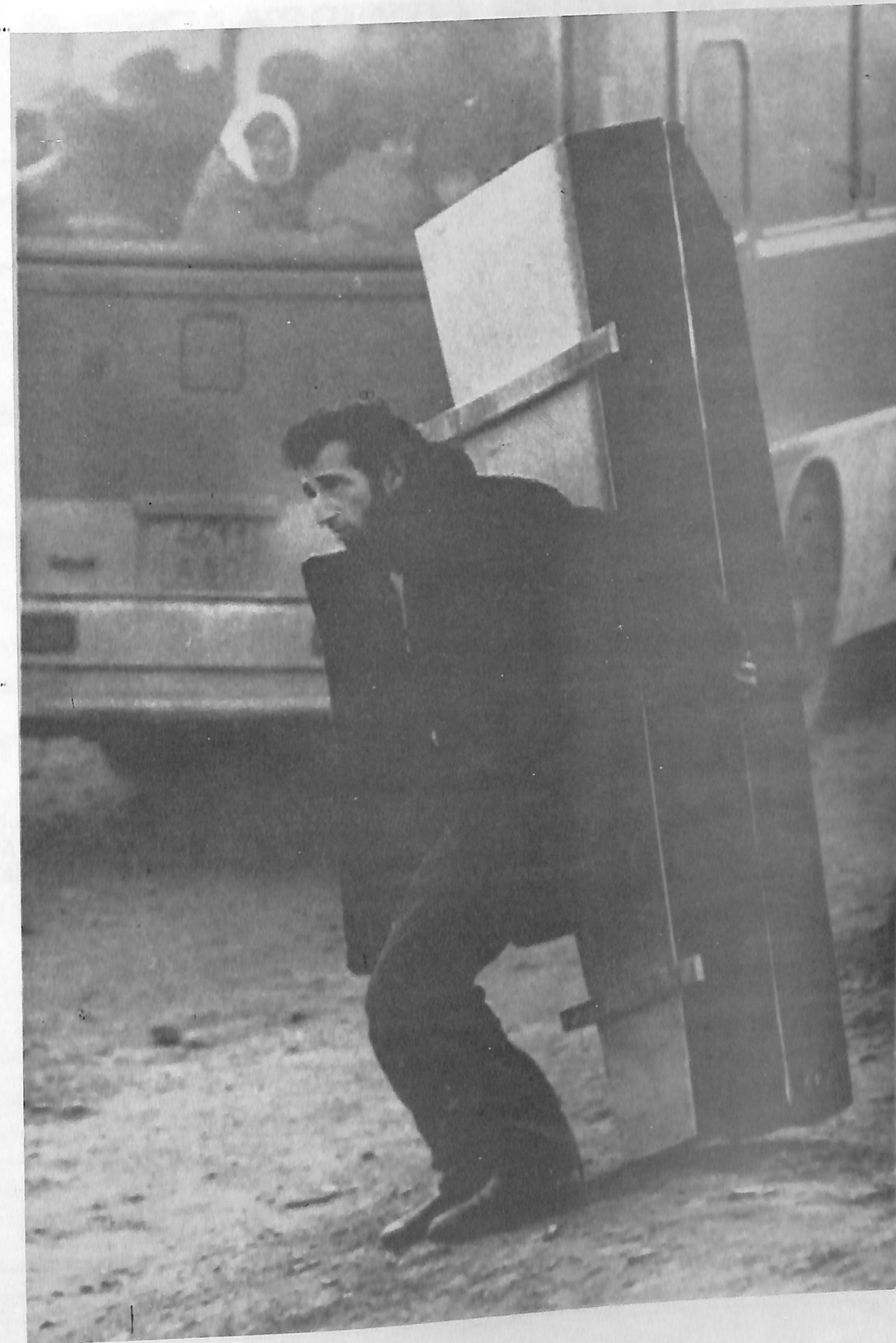
YES, I want my children in the Armenia Relief Effort. Please send me _____ Armenia Relief Coin Banks.

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone# _____

Mail to: **Armenian Missionary Association of America**
140 Forest Avenue
Paramus, NJ 07652



Grief-stricken man carrying a coffin



Women weeping over a dead relative

**Invite
A Friend
To Join
Our
Relief
Efforts**

The AMAA seeks to reach as many people as possible who are concerned about the plight and the welfare of the survivors of the earthquake in Armenia. Take a moment and write down the names and addresses of friends or colleagues who share your concern for our people. Mail this coupon to: AMAA, 140 Forest Ave., Paramus, NJ 07652

Name _____
Street _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Telephone _____

Name _____
Street _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Telephone _____

Name _____
Street _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Telephone _____

ARMENIA URGENTLY NEEDS OUR HELP

The devastation and human suffering caused by the cataclysmic earthquake in Armenia are of unimaginable magnitude.

- Scores of towns and cities are destroyed . . .
- Tens of thousands of innocent children are orphaned . . .
- Hundreds of thousands of survivors are left homeless . . .

But the situation is not hopeless, and you – who share our concern for the plight and welfare of the survivors of the earthquake in Armenia – can help! Your contribution can make a difference!

Armenia needs our help as never before. Consider how much more you can contribute in the rebuilding and rehabilitation efforts in Armenia.

The need is great! The need is urgent!

_____ Fill in and mail this coupon today _____

YES, I would like to share in the rebuilding and rehabilitation efforts in Armenia.

☐ Enclosed is a check of \$ _____

☐ I have already sent my relief support but also wish to contribute the enclosed donation of \$ _____

☐ I pledge to contribute \$ _____ payable in the next _____ months.

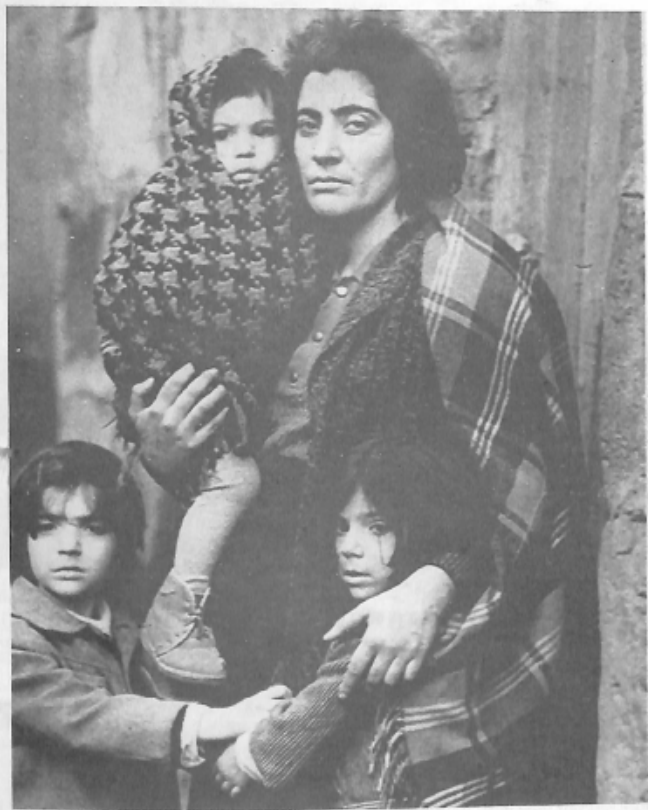
NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

Make your checks to AMAA-Armenia Relief and mail to:

Armenian Missionary Association of America
140 Forest Avenue
Paramus, NJ 07652
All contributions are Tax-deductible

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The surviving members of an Armenian family huddle together after waiting 40 hours to be freed from the rubble of the earthquake

WHERE WILL YOUR RELIEF SUPPORT GO?

•In accordance with AMAA's policy, all donations for the relief of earthquake survivors in Armenia will be allocated in their entirety for that purpose, with no deductions for overhead or other expenses.

•Medical care, food and shelter will be priority concerns.

•The AMAA will continue to monitor closely the situation in Armenia and coordinate its relief efforts with those of other Armenian organizations so that duplication is avoided and help is directed where it is most needed.

•The AMAA will constantly review its priorities in order to focus its work on the changing needs in Armenia and apply its resources effectively.

•The AMAA will do everything it can to make sure that the thousands of Armenian orphans are cared for by Armenian families and are not, as the Soviet authorities apparently intend, distributed among families in Russia or neighboring countries.

Armenian Missionary Association of America
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